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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sheriff's Office warns of possible telephone scam

Georgetown, Del., Feb. 5, 2009 – The Sussex County Sheriff's Office warns the public that potential scammers are posing as deputies and using fraudulent caller ID technology to try to obtain bank account information, credit card numbers and other personal data. If you receive such a call, hang up and notify the authorities.

Sheriff Eric Swanson today announced someone is claiming to be a representative of his office, having called a local residence and requested payment in advance for documents and papers to be served. The call appeared legitimate at first, because the telephone number on the recipient's caller ID showed a local number.

The potential scammer, however, may have used a trick in caller ID technology that allows someone to "spoof" an otherwise legitimate number. Spoofing allows a caller to show on a recipient's caller ID display a number that is not that of the actual location. The practice is similar to e-mail spammers sending fraudulent messages from addresses that appear legitimate.

Sheriff Swanson reminds the public that his office never requires payment from individuals being served court papers and other legal documents, nor does his office accept credit cards or take personal data over the telephone.

"Someone out there is using some pretty clever tricks to try to fool the public," Sheriff Swanson said. "We will not tolerate this breach of the public's trust, and we want the public to be on the lookout for this scam."

So far, only one documented incident has occurred. The Sheriff's Office is hopeful by spreading the word early that the public will not fall prey to the scam.

If you are contacted by someone claiming to be a representative of the Sheriff's Office, and you are in doubt, please call the office at (302) 855-7830. If you believe you have been a target in this scam, contact the Sheriff's Office or the Delaware State Police Troop 4 at (302) 856-5850.